

THE INDIAN REVOLUTION AND THE CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME

BHUPENDRA KUMAR DATTA



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AND THE
CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME



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BY

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FOREWORD

My attention was drawn to the articles which are collected and printed in this book—"THE INDIAN REVOLUTION AND THE CONSTRUCTIVE WORK" when they were first published in *Forward*. I felt much impressed by them and considered them to be of such value as to be reproduced in a book form. I am therefore glad that that wish of mine has been fulfilled. Sreejut Datta has read widely and deeply and his articles are thoughtful and thought-provoking. In these articles an attempt has been made to reconcile what he considers to be the essence of the Gandhian philosophy and the Constructive Programme of Gandhiji with what are considered to be the latest thought of the West. We are now on the crossway, and anything that provokes thought and due consideration of differing and even contradictory viewpoints should be welcomed. I am glad that Sj. Datta has written with knowledge, with logic on his side, with insight and above all in a way that is bound to arrest attention.

Congress Camp,
Meerut,
24th Nov., 1946.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, which appears to read "Rajendra Prasad". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

INTRODUCTION

These articles from the pen of Sri Bhupendra Kumar Datta were published in Forward under the caption 'Now and Then'. At that time they attracted public attention and the attention of many eminent Congress leaders including Dr. Rajendra Prasad. These are now being reprinted in this book having been revised and enlarged.

Sri Bhupendra Kumar Datta is a political worker of eminence. Starting his political career under Jatin Mukherjee of Balasore fame, he has now come on the open Congress platform as a firm believer in Gandhian revolutionary method and programme. He is a writer of rare ability and an erudite scholar. His study in Marxian as well as Gandhian literature is deep and extensive as will be seen in this book.

As editor of Forward before his arrest in 1941, he wrote a series of articles explaining the Congress programme, its war policy and the individual Satyagraha. Gandhiji subsequently wrote about the exposition as given by the Forward—"Your interpretation of the present struggle is accurate."

We hope, even in spite of the present disturbed temper of the country, this book will be well received by the public especially by the politically conscious intellectuals. In the dialectical evolution of political thoughts, Gandhism is the antithesis of the thesis Marxism and the Indian revolution will be the embodiment of the new synthesis. The author has ably explained this point of view in these articles. To him Gandhism has a philosophical aspect as well as a practical.

We regret the delay in publication of the book though the entire matter was set up long ago. The present disturbed condition of the city is responsible for it.

Nov. 8, 1946.

PUBLISHERS.

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PREFACE

The nine articles that are published here in book form originally appeared serially under the caption "Then and Now" in *Forward*, Calcutta, in its issues from March 8 to May 5, 1946. They were written in jail. They have since been re-written with a number of additions and alterations.

These articles have not undertaken to interpret the eighteen point programme of Mahatma Gandhi item by item. That has been done by far more competent authorities including Gandhiji himself and Dr. Rajendra Prasad. These articles rather aim at giving the background that, according to the writer, lends to the programme its proper revolutionary significance.

The background is supplied by the post-war world that is yet in process of unfolding itself. On perusal, it may seem at the present moment that the shape of things in that world as has been visualised in these pages is different from what has been taking place before our eyes. But the author believes that things, as they appear, are different from what are normally expected to follow from underlying forces.

An interim National Government has already been formed in New Delhi with the Congress President, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru at its head. A constitution-making body has been elected by the existing provincial legislatures and is expected shortly to undertake its allotted task. If it is supposed that these will finally solve, or at least lead directly to the solution of, the political problems of India, then, of course, the following articles prove a false prophet, they lose all meaning and significance.

But, already we hear that Nehru is functioning in spite of Wavell; that the European members of the permanent services in the different departments are trying every means to obstruct the Interim Government; that both Wavell and the Services are anxious to get back the Muslim Leaguers, who have declared non-co-operation both with the Interim Government and the Constituent Assembly; that instead of helping the Nehru cabinet in dealing with the situation, as British imperialism invariably does in quelling political disturbances, both Wavell and the Services are trying to use the present widespread disturbances that to the superficial observer look like communal disturbances as an excuse to restore the Viceroy's despotic position and to deprive the Interim Government even of its nominal cabinet status. That means the Congress will function in the Government only for a short while.

That is just what is expected. In the opinion of the author, Britain has only been making an experiment. In spite of her Labour Government, Britain is a capitalist country. Her mainstay is her trade. But trade prospects are utterly barren in the post-war world. During the war, every nation sought to be self-supporting, sought to meet both its civil and war needs. Those capacities will now be readjusted with a view mainly to produce consumers' goods. As a result, the scope for international trade will be reduced to the minimum.

Again, machine industry has come to acquire unprecedented efficiency. That means in a world, that yet shirks the socialist solution of its economic problems, unemployment on a gigantic scale and low purchasing power of overwhelming masses of mankind.

These facts portend in the author's opinion, the last and the most insoluble of the contradictions involved in capitalist economy. The United Nations, even while the war was going on had quite an adequate idea of these developments. And the Security, Food, Monetary and other conferences they hold during the war and thereafter sought, in their own way, to provide against those developments. They planned, to put it pithily, a fascist system on a world-wide scale under Anglo-American ægis. They hoped against hope that capitalist economy could still be made to work in the post-war world mainly through more efficient and more ruthless exploitation particularly of the colonial countries and those vanquished and subjugated in the last war.

Meanwhile, the average Britisher thought otherwise. He recognised the desperate character of the ways devised by the United Nations led by conservative Britain. He sent Labour to power. He wanted it to tread a different path. He wanted to see if the trader nation's trade could be carried on by reconciling the colonial countries and taking such other steps as might increase their purchasing power. This would, besides, help in checking the spread of Soviet Russia's influence. Thus the common man of Britain wanted to avoid or at least postpone a war with Soviet Russia that conservative Britain would fain hasten. A fascist-imperialist country must always be planning wars and newer wars. The very nature of the circumstances compels it.

British Labour has not up till now baffled the expectations of the British elector at least so far as India is concerned. And in the attempt to come to an understanding with India, Labour has not hesitated even to cold-shoulder

the Muslim League, that imperialist Britain carefully nurtured through decades and brought up to its present position of a full-fledged counter-revolutionary party. Labour knows that of all the parties, it is the Indian National Congress that alone can deliver the goods. The Congress has a plan and a programme that can lead to the betterment of the conditions of the masses, to the raising of India's purchasing power. No other party has anything like it.

But while for Britain it is the problem mainly of her trade, for India it is the problem of her freedom. For some length the two may go together but not very far. To raise the standard of living of the Indians, India must industrialise herself. Here comes in another contradiction. India's industrialisation cannot be welcome to the British capitalists, sorely in need of expanding markets particularly in the days to come. And one of the proposals of the British Cabinet Mission is that when India gets a regularly constituted Government in accordance with the constitution framed by the proposed Constituent Assembly, that Government will enter into a treaty with the British Government chiefly in respect of trade, the British army and the mutual financial obligations. It is hardly possible that the two Governments can come to any agreement on any of these issues.

Besides, Labour is proceeding with a programme of nationalisation for Britain herself. It is to be seen how far capitalist Britain can tolerate it. Then, if Labour fails to come to a complete understanding with India and improve Britain's trade through it, the British capitalist will soon regain the upperhand. The electors, as usual, will be bamboozled. There may even be a *putsch*. The moderate pro-

gramme of socialisation that Labour is at present following in Britain will then be a help rather than a hindrance to the conservative elements in setting up a full-fledged fascist order, even as the New Deal and the Beveridge Plan are conceived as mere stepping stones to the ever-growing fascist order.

That order will not be slow in breaking off with India. The imperialist will then appear in his darkest hue. Exploitation will be ruthless. That is what the United Nations Conferences have already planned for in advance on a world-wide scale. India can ignore that prospect and preparation against it only at her own peril. That is also the preparation for the last phase of the revolutionary struggle. It is just this juncture that Gandhiji's constructive programme anticipates. Here Gandhi looks beyond the tip of his nose as few others do. And the Congress under his leadership enjoins upon all its adherents to organise the masses on the basis of his constructive programme for a sustained struggle and the final assault on the fascist-imperialist stronghold. Without entering into technicalities and details and without an attempt to undertake the examination of all the resolutions of the many conferences of the United Nations, the following articles seek to draw out the significance of the Congress constructive programme in the situation that is inevitably ahead of us.

Meanwhile, the Congress has undertaken the administration of the whole of India under the old constitution. Its powers are limited. Those forming the Government are not all Congressmen. Those others have not got their eyes fixed on the common man of India as the Congress has. So there are great handicaps initially. Still the Congress-

men cannot afford to go slow. They must forge ahead. Their first concern will, of course, be to tackle the problem of the appalling poverty of the masses. In this task, they have to follow a programme of planned economy. Our agriculture has plenty of room for improvement. Besides, Congress in power will not stop short at cottage industry in the middle of the Twentieth Century. India, as she at present is, cannot, of course, find work for every individual in factory and machine industry. So, side by side with such industry, incentive must be given to the development also of cottage industries on a large scale.

Finally, there is the problem of heavy and basic industries. It will be absurd for India to remain dependent on other nations in this direction while seeking to remove the poverty and unemployment of her teeming millions. This opens wide the door to the final conflict with Britain. Britain today must have the largest market from where to draw raw materials and where to sell her finished products and thus find both employment for her common man and profit for her capitalist. The leadership of the latter will organise the former and wage war, an unrelenting war, with the common man of India and of other colonial countries.

But the power and the standard of living the common man of India will meanwhile come to enjoy both under the present Interim Government and the regularly constituted one that is to emerge out of the Constituent Assembly will stand him in good stead in the coming conflict. The taste of power and a higher standard of living will give him the opportunity for once perhaps in many centuries to shed the fatalistic submission to ever-worsening poverty. That will bring out the tiger qualities in him. He will then have

tasted blood. He will have found work. He will have known a form of life hitherto unknown. It will now be a tough job to deprive him of it as capitalist Britain through economic exploitation and competition and administrative measures will try to do. He is then reasonably expected to put up a fight the desperate character of which will be beyond even of his own dream.

That struggle still awaits us. And that struggle will unfold the utility of the Congress constructive programme. But the task of the Congress Government as it has been formed as also of the one likely to emerge out of the Constituent Assembly is yet more comprehensive, having, of course, the ultimate goal in view. In order that the Indians may have a feeling of strength and security they must not merely enjoy power but they must also know and feel that they have been enjoying power. This can best be done by a process of devolution and decentralisation of political power and economic control.

One cannot speak with any amount of confidence and certainty in this regard. One does not know how far the working of the present constitution under the necessarily attendant circumstances will allow it. But it should be the very best endeavour of a party, having in view a revolutionary struggle ahead, to pass on the initiative to the people themselves as far as practicable. The day to day administration as well as the primary control over local production and distribution should be allowed to be carried on by the local *panchayets*. They should, of course, be guided and advised by the higher *panchayets* that will have the broader national interests in view.

Such decentralisation will not merely have a great

educative value, will not only make the masses feel the power they have come to enjoy but will go a long way to solve the present communal troubles. The relations between the different communities have come to assume a form very much beyond the worst apprehensions even of those who foresaw the manifestations that might accompany the transference of power. The Interim Government is faced with a tremendous problem. It cannot shirk it. Rather it has readily to deal with it.

The Congress can no longer deny its position of a revolutionary organisation. That being so, the Interim Government that it has formed must consider itself a revolutionary provisional Government. As such, it must assess the nature of the Muslim League party. British imperialism has reared the latter up to its present position and is trying to obstruct and destroy through its instrumentality the revolutionary Government that the Congress has come to form. Even though the League party is now exclusively identified with a very large section of a particular community, it is obvious that it by no means represents the aspirations of the masses, the peasantry and the working people of that community. It represents the aspirations of the upper and middle class Muslims. That is where capitalist Britain has found such a handy ally in it. And the party shares the character that Marx assigned in such vivid terms to Louis Napoleon's "Society of December the Tenth". In its programme of action since its Direct Action Day, it has scrupulously avoided all attack on the party of imperialism in India. It has concentrated all its wrath on the Congress, the only party of the revolutionary masses of India. As with the imperialist its bugbear is the revolutionary national

flag of India. It is thus in every sense a counter-revolutionary party. And the Congress Government as a revolutionary Government must prove worth its salt by treating it in the same manner as any revolutionary Government would treat a counter-revolutionary party. It may be that we have at the head of our revolutionary organisation a Gandhi instead of a Trotsky. That makes some difference only in respect of methods but none in principles. A revolution involving the entirety of the masses can never succeed if it allows counter-revolutionary parties to function as they please.

But apart from the administrative measures necessitated by the present developments, the Interim Government must take other steps that will help the working of the relevant items on the Congress constructive programme. Education and service are the two underlying principles of that programme. The Congress Government may immediately take up a programme of rapidly spreading secular and rational education. Control by local *panchayets* over the economic and social life will conduce to the best form of service being rendered to the masses. It will rapidly lead to the eradication of the various forms of injustice that the different communities have suffered long. The removal of some of the sources of injustice such as untouchability will inevitably depend on State legislation.

Industrialisation and socialisation are a great antidote to religious fanaticism and separatism. We do not know how far the present Government and the one likely to succeed it can proceed on those roads. But both the economic and communal maladies demand those antidotes. The co-operative life in the *panchayets* and the comparative

freedom from want will lay the foundation of more harmonious social relations.

Other remedies the Constituent Assembly must devise. The most effective one is, of course, the doing away with communal electorate in every sphere of our national and civic life. Again, in order that the masses of the different minority communities may not entertain any suspicion against the constitution to be framed by the Constituent Assembly, a nation-wide plebiscite must be held. A widespread educative campaign in this behalf must precede the holding of the plebiscite. The plebiscite and the education for it will cut the ground from under the feet of those who mislead the masses in their selfish and class interests. The holding of the plebiscite will be one of the tasks of the Interim Government and preparations should be started with as little loss of time as is feasible.

All this is written in the fervent hope that the door is finally closed for any counter-revolutionary party to get into the Interim Government. But in spite of the Labour Government in Britain, the Viceroy and the Governors and the Permanent Services are functioning here on behalf of and in the interests of the capitalist clique of Britain. And no one can yet say with any amount of certainty that these will not succeed in persuading the Muslim League to eat the humble pie, to withdraw all the heroic conditions hitherto tom-tomed and get into the Nehru Cabinet through the backdoor of Viceregal favour. For the League that is of course the front door. On the other hand, if not for anything else, the Viceroy wants it in order to get his despotic rule restored. For, as soon as the League gets in, the Nehru Cabinet is reduced to the position of the Viceroy's

old Executive Council. The League will raise objection to every step that the Congress will propose and every matter will have to be referred to the Viceroy for final decision.

That things are being manœuvred into that position all symptoms go to prove. A tenth part of the disturbances that the Direct Action programme of the Muslim League has initiated would supply enough excuse for Lord Wavell to declare illegal and suppress any other party. No serious attempt has been made to quell or stop the disturbances that are unprecedented in the loss of life and property and in the mutual hatred and passion that has been aroused. Even a Governor from the Labour party of Britain has become a doll in the hands of the Civil Service clique and is playing the game of Churchill's Britain.

It is possible, even probable, that Sardar Patel as Minister in charge of Law and Order has advised the Viceroy to take effective action to spare Bengal things like the Calcutta carnage. But we guess, the Viceroy has raised the plea of provincial autonomy. He would not admit breakdown of administration in this Province. He would not thus weaken imperialism's main prop today. He would rather very naturally try every subtle means to get the League rescind its resolutions of non-co-operation with the Interim Government.

If it does, it will not be long before the Congress will have to walk out of their impotent position in the Interim Government. In such an eventuality, Congress, as a non-official organisation will have to patiently and slowly work out its constructive programme. Impossible conditions have been created. Yet the Congress will have to strain every nerve to work for an atmosphere of mutual love and trust

between the two communities who are now in a mood of mutual animosity and are growing the spirit to live in a state of preparedness against each other.

But there is already a silver lining noticeable. Mahatma Gandhi said long ago that the Hindu is a coward and the Muslim a bully. The Hindu now finds that he must shed his cowardice and the Muslim that bullying does not pay in the long run. The common Muslims at least in some of the affected areas have already been heard to say that they have played interested people's game and have unnecessarily suffered in diverse ways and in many cases suffered the loss of the means of their livelihood. In fact, the common Muslim is already on the verge of the realisation that the Muslim League is not his party, it is the Muslim boss's party. Now, the iron must be struck at least in Bengal while it is still hot. Slow but sure approach must immediately be made with the eighteen point programme of the Congress that is the common man's programme, common man irrespective of all communal and racial affiliation

In the rest of India, while the Congress is still in power, no means should be neglected that may win over the masses as a whole. No sections of them must be allowed to be prevailed over by those adventurists and counter-revolutionists who may carry them over once again to the side of the fascist imperialists. All these suggestions would be out of place in these prefatory remarks were not the purpose of the following articles to indicate the Congress way to the third great revolution of modern times and the greatest in all human history.

CALCUTTA,

September 20, 1946.

BHUPENDRA K. DATTA

"THE COMMON MAN IN QUEST OF HIS DESTINY"

Artist—J. DUTT.

THE INDIAN REVOLUTION AND THE CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME

I BUILDING UP OF POWER

Mahatma Gandhi advised the leaders of the Jatiya Sarkar¹ at Mahishadal during his recent visit there: "A non-violent revolution is not a programme of seizure of power. . . . If under the impact of foreign invasion or some such cause the ruling power abdicates and a vacuum is created, the people's organisation will naturally take over its functions but such Jatiya Sarkar would have no other sanction except that of non-violence and service to the people to enforce its fiats," thus reports Shri Pyarelal in the *Harijan*. To get a glimpse of what is ahead of us and to judge our task in its light we must clearly understand the significance of these pregnant words.

A revolutionary is not worth the name if he has not yet realised that a century has sped through the six years of war. Old values have changed more completely and in more fields than ordinarily imagined. We have no space to judge all the big changes that it has wrought. The main effect of the war would be a tremendous increase in industrial efficiency throughout the world—artificially suppressed and kept in check for a time in the vanquished countries. On the whole, it means a glut of production on the one hand and, on the other, unemployment on a gigantic scale resulting in low pur-

¹ Provisional National Government established during August 1942 uprising.

chasing power of the overwhelming masses of mankind. While profit motive still persists, a society with such lack of balance on the economic plane can hope to run—albeit a short course—through no other means than fascism, than strict and violent regimentation of social life in its entirety.

So it must be realised, even now, that fascism was no national vice with Italy or Germany or Japan. It is the inevitable outcome of profit motive when the capitalist system of production and distribution has already outrun its normal course. Thus a spell of world fascism under other auspices is just now in process of emerging through the period of post-war unrest. The many outbursts of that unrest were foreseen and the Anglo-American masters of the world today will utilise them now to serve their own ends. Both England and America have been able to keep up in their home front a show of democracy, the former thanks mainly to her vast colonial empire, the latter because of her yet surviving balance between industrial and agricultural economy.

Food—a Weapon

The rising fascism was planned for in advance in the numerous United Nations Conferences that took place mainly on the initiative of the British Fuehrer, Winston Churchill. One such Conference took place at Hotspring in May-June, 1943. It was a food conference. There the British Delegation proposed "a world food pool." The proposal was accepted. "Food is a weapon," as Litvinof had put it when he refused to accept relief during the Russian famine of 1920-21 from the American Relief Administration. Litvinof accused the A.R.A. of having used the weapon to cause the downfall of Bela Kun's revolutionary Government in

Hungary. The full significance of the "world food pool" should not have been missed after Vice-President Henry Wallace of America had explained it at Cleveland in such unmistakable language in October 1943 "We do not propose to feed a single person *anywhere in the world* who is not willing to produce to the extent of his ability" (Italics ours)

The "food pool" was said to be necessary for expansion of trade. Such argument was not cogent or clear enough to be plausible. The ordinary mechanism of gold pool certainly bears no comparison to this food pool. Some of the devices that were hinted might include the extraction from the colonial countries of raw material in the domain of food—in other domains it had already been comprehensive enough in the past—on an unprecedentedly vaster scale. Food then might be rendered back as finished goods, for instance, as vitamin tablets in the name of "nutritional needs." This would give some employment to the people of the imperial countries in manufacture and in transport. Obviously, this could mean only a drop in the ocean. The "food pool" was proposed and decided to be "internationally held" as a "buffer stock" to mitigate the periodical trade crises. Whatever utility it might or might not have in meeting such crises as we used to see in the past, it was difficult to follow how it would be useful that way when the crisis would quite apparently be chronic and worsen day after day. The real purpose therefore appears to be more sinister than the authors of the scheme would readily advert to. And it was soon demonstrated before our very eyes.

While Mr. Churchill's government sent the Delegation to the Food Conference and its resolutions were being discussed

and interpreted and accepted, a "man-made famine" took place in a corner of the empire, over which Mr. Churchill was then presiding not to liquidate it. Several millions were carried away by the famine. And at least four times that number were physically and morally maimed for life. Not a shot was fired at anybody. Yet so many died and such mass demoralisation followed. It guaranteed for the rest of the war period immunity from mass upheaval of the 1942 type, or for that matter, of any type whatever near the eastern theatre of the war. As for the future, what can stand in the way of fascism or any worse system—if anything worse could be devised—being imposed on people demoralised on such a large scale by a man-made famine? The famine proved to the hilt to what utter insecurity the lives of the masses throughout the world had been reduced. Secure life is to-day the exclusive property of the upper few—indeed, a handful. Others are simply at their mercy.* The invention of the atom bomb followed the famine. The atom bomb is the very emblem of the fascist order of society that is coming into being.

Charka—Emblem of World Revolution

Our struggle from now on must be visualised in this perspective. If Marx was a prophet of a revolution that would lead mankind out of the capitalist chaos, Gandhi has proved the prophet of the coming world revolution against fascist brutality or a fascist order to be imposed through the infliction of man-made famines. For the overwhelming masses of mankind to-day there is no way out except through what Gandhi's constructive programme stands for. If atom bomb is the emblem of world-fascism, his *Charka* is the emblem of world

revolution against it. When freedom is denied to all but the handful, the *Charka* stands for the free individual. It is the common man's writ of rebellion against all servitude and as such finds place on our National Flag. Gandhi has said repeatedly that *Charka* is at the centre of the planetary system of his constructive programme. But we see that his love for the Common Man is at the centre of the solar system of all his queer doctrines—some love to call them his fads—of truth, non-violence, *charka*, *khadi* and so on and so forth. Indeed, study him thoroughly and you will realise, his truth is identical with his love for the common man, his non-violence is identical with revolution as distinct from partial risings or rebellions or mutinies or a mere war of independence.

As for the *Charka*, we have said, we view it as the emblem of world revolution to-day. If anything, its significance is that every individual must be self-supporting. If through the control over food, over the world money market, and over trade in other consumer's goods, life of the common man can be subjected to crisis after crisis, specially food crisis and cloth crisis, what will the common man look for except self-sufficiency, except the means to be self-supporting?

In several other parts of the world, to be self-supporting, an individual may not have to take to the poor *Charka*. But reduced to the plight that the Indian masses have been, we cannot conceive of anything—any other means of livelihood—requiring a larger capital to be at their disposal. Therefore, it is the source of wealth for the poorest, for those on the lowest rung. And it supplies at the same time one of the two primary economic needs of man. The criticism is idle that its income is insignificant. It is idle if we think in terms of

the actual earnings of the poorest, the common man of India and if we think of his unemployed hours and days, nay, his whole life. Undoubtedly, people can earn more if they work at a machine. But how many of them? And how many of them will be earning anything at all, specially when all the war-time industries are converted into peace time industries? The mirage of larger earning will only drown them in the bog of unemployment. And each endeavouring to come up will only reinforce the slavery and misery of others.

The Form of Struggle

Besides, it is not an economic problem that is before us. It is the problem of our struggle. Our struggle against the fascism of the character described can be conceived only as a struggle of self-supporting individuals composing self-contained areas or localities or units of villages. Hence the stress in the Constructive Programme is on village products. The common man in a locality will grow his own food, produce his own cloth and his other essential needs and live on their exchange. He will have nothing to do with capitalist produce, foreign or indigenous, nothing with service in their mills or factories or States, nothing with their arms, or batons or bayonets nor even with the capitalist media of exchange. This explains the requirement to make partial payment in self-spun yarn for the *khadi* one wants to buy. This is merely the thinner end of the wedge. So long factory industry lives and thrives on his own slavery imposed on him by his fellowmen, the common man will rather do with the plain subsistence that he along with his co-villagers may produce. He will neither take nor give any form of service to his capitalist masters or their agents. It is thus the common man's

total war, a war of attrition against capitalism itself that now proposes to persist through fascism.

This in brief is the technique of struggle the Congress has evolved under Gandhiji's leadership. The forms of State that capitalism functioned through in past history were very different from its modern, that is, the fascist form. The technique of the socialist seizure of power, as developed by Lenin was best suited to deal with yesterday's State forms of the capitalist society. But as against fascism, it must be not merely seizure of power. It must be building up of power. That is what the Congress constructive programme aims at.

While the structure of fascism is essentially centralised and its strength dwells at its centre, the instrument of fight against it has been well thought out in extreme decentralisation. Indeed, the apparatuses of self-contained areas composed of self-supporting individuals are in course of struggle to emerge into small independent republics, defying masters and defying death. Where the atom bomb showers death, the common man has in his armoury no other weapon against it than the defiance of death. Against the armed might of the master the masses can count but on their organised will. Other arms are simply out of their reach.

The Decisive Weapon

In the ultimate analysis again, actual revolutions, not revolts or wars of national independence, have been achieved non-violently. Violence has then been necessary only in order to save them from counter-revolution. That was the case with both the great revolutions of the modern world, the French and the Russian. And again, in the final act of the

drama, it has always been the armed might of the opposite camp that has swung over to the side of the revolution and led it to victorious conclusion. In fact that is one of the pre-conditions of a successful revolution. So far as one can judge the inter-relation of forces, that condition is more easily fulfilled particularly in the extraordinary circumstances of to-day in a non-violent struggle of self-suffering.

This will be more and more obvious as the form of the struggle we have just pictured evolves and the opposing force of capitalism loses all sap and is in the process of withering away. This process of withering away from sheer inanition starts even now through the loss of purchasing power of the overwhelming masses. And hereafter it will be further accentuated by the revolutionary struggle—a struggle of total non-co-operation with capitalism as a whole—from which the masses have no escape at mere will—will of any party whatsoever.

There is no revolution made to order or suiting our proclivities or preconceived notions. It is entirely guided by the needs and feelings of the masses. As history develops, these needs and feelings change. The course and the form of the revolution also change accordingly. It is the task of the leadership to prejudge those changing moods, collate forces in the light of those moods, shape the programme and give timely guidance and initiative so that the forces may not fritter away in aimless, sporadic outbursts and activities.

The greater the efficiency capitalism has been developing on the side of production the more of human beings it has been alienating. Now it will starve them to death by millions—even its supporters and their near relations. Through starvation on such mass scale, vacuum will, even

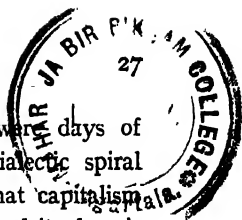
without foreign invasion, tend to be created in the capitalist's social machinery in different countries and localities. Wherever the masses are meanwhile awake to the terrible dangers of the situation, they will tend to build up their own power, however poor their resources. They will build up and wield the power. As the struggle develops, the forces of the existing power, who have often to go through experiences that make them more conscious, will incline to go over to the support of the new power. They may even take the initiative at places. There are already noticeable symptoms of it. This will grow quickly infectious as starvation spreads and the fascist methods are forced to become more and more blatant. Thus the form of struggle is going to prove a world phenomenon in the coming days. It is calculated to render world capitalism effete even before it is finally destroyed by the revolution.

II ELIMINATION OF CLASSES

If the diagnosis be correct that a fascist form of society is going to seize the common man throughout the world in its grip, the Gandhian technique also—with variations according to varying conditions in different countries—is going to prove the one weapon in the hands of the common man throughout the world. In this connection, it is worth while trying to understand the definition Mahatmaji gave to his non-violent revolution in course of the same conversation with the Mahisadal Jatiya Sarkar workers. He said, "It (non-violent revolution) is a programme of transformation of relationships ending in a peaceful transfer of power."

Mahatmaji might have a prevision of what world forces were coming into play through and after the war. Others had not. The most important consequence of the war on the problem of our struggle has been discussed in the previous article. It has evolved our programme from one of seizure of power into one of building up of power. It leaves nothing uncertain. It is almost a fool-proof and knave-proof programme. But to evolve the strategy and tactics involved in it, we must analyse two other factors, following as corollaries from the main consequence of the war described previously.

In the first place, let us take the problem of unemployment as it affects the forces at our disposal in our revolutionary struggle. Marx in his days discovered in the factory workers his disciplined army of the revolution. Marx was



perfectly right in his judgment. But those were days of rising capitalism. Since World War I, the dialectic spiral has passed another curve—a grand curve. That capitalism has passed the peak of its growth and has outlived its day, is evident from the proportion of the unemployed it is throwing off as flotsam and jetsam of society. After this war the proportion is going to be overwhelming.

Proletariat's Changing Role

Threatened by unemployment on such a scale, already since the end of the previous war, the proletariat engaged as factory labour was growing struggle-shy. Of course he could be and used to be drawn into local and partial struggles. But that was only by the application of the Menshevik policy of economism, that is, only when he could be lured by the prospect of some immediate gain of an economic nature. Political struggle he would rather avoid. Because in a sea of unemployment he did not find the necessary amount of confidence. The attempt to drag the unwilling horse to the pond often resulted in the factory labour being organised under the managerial auspices of the factory concerned. This only paved the way to the rise of fascism in several countries.

After the last war,—however appearances may delude through these days of post-war unrest—this factor is going to be conspicuous even to the short-sighted. Already the labour force is specially favoured. It is along with the military and the police, a part of the "essential services". And as we have said before, the Anglo-American masters of the world "do not propose to feed a single person . . . who," in their judgment, "is not willing to produce to the extent of

his ability." If not fed from the "world food pool", the "essential service" man of today becomes the "sick destitute" of tomorrow. That stark reality faces the factory labourer every moment of his life.

Therefore, simply to maintain his existence, even a precarious existence on this earth of the living, the natural tendency for him would be to please the master. In that anxiety, he would not hesitate even to go against the common interest of labour and get recruited into a fascist band. This is more likely to follow a labour strike when large numbers would be pitilessly discharged because idle hands—even expert hands—are plentifully available after the war.

In the second place, we must see and judge at what phase of the class struggle we have arrived, especially after the last war. In our country, or, for that matter, practically in all colonial countries, class struggle has arrived at the phase of class elimination. It does not mean that the capitalist classes have disappeared or are going to disappear from the scene without a struggle, but we must see and judge their present state, what rôle they are going to play in the coming days and what strength they would be commanding in their counter-revolutionary struggle.

Indian Capitalist's Predicament

Marx says, the middle classes are no solid class by themselves. They look so in a period of stability but tend to break at any crisis. At a moment of revolution they are found on both sides. The plight of our Indian capitalist classes is going to be exactly the same sandwiched as they would now growingly feel between a severe competition with British capital on the one hand and extremely low purchas-

ing power of the Indian masses on the other. They are as if between the devil and the deep sea. In this predicament, they would tend to break into two. One section would be feeling that under British protection, they would find better opportunity to exploit the Indian masses. Hence, it would be profitable to ally with the British masters and, if need be, to help bring into being an Indo-British Fascist State and to become its limb.

The other section would realise the extreme folly of this course. It would not know how to exploit the masses which are practically left without any purchasing power. This section would rather seek to strengthen the Indian National Congress so that the British masters might feel the need to come to a political understanding with the Congress and with its help to rehabilitate the economic condition of the masses. But judging by the way our British masters are going, this prospect is hardly likely to materialise. British capital has already chosen its course. During the war, while British militarism failed in every theatre of war, British imperialism planned the future offensive against the Indian masses. The Government of India Act, 1935, that had freed the permanent services from the control of legislatures and ministries—a fascistic device—provided ample opportunities. Any number of advisers and experts were consulted, the Coupland scheme of reforms was adumbrated, planning on the basis of regimentation of national life in different directions was devised and constitutional and administrative measures and methods were adopted that would be best suited to carry on ignoring the people's interests. At the cross-road of history, British capitalism has already made its choice of the road to fascism rather than that to socialism. It could not do

otherwise. It could not commit *harakiri*. It could not shun profit motive.

The next alternative therefore for the section of Indian capital we are now discussing is to see if with the help of the Indian National Congress, it can help to raise the economic standard of the common people, to increase its purchasing power. This is practically a Hobson's choice. Some of our political workers may be too slow to perceive it, books and the so-called "Leftist" (!) propaganda may have blurred their vision, but our Indian capitalist classes know it that the programme of the Congress, the common man's organisation, is a programme of uncompromising war against all capitalism—native or foreign. The Congress is digging for them their grave. They know it. But they also know that somebody must dig their grave—whether it is the Indian National Congress or British imperialism. They must make their choice and willy-nilly they have made their choice. They have chosen to be with their people, all the time hoping—as all human beings must hope—that a better day may come, even if by a fluke. Then they would sell their wares to the masses as of old and would flourish. But that again is never to be.

Changing Character of the Struggle

All that has been said above, about Indian labour and Indian capital does not however mean that the former has altogether lost its revolutionary rôle and the latter has shed its profit motive and will yield without a fight. What it means is that relationships have undergone a transformation. As a result, the former will carry on its struggle more as a part of the national struggle than of the class struggle. And the latter will give the fight but will lose more of its identity in

the national identity and will thus be without much of its fang in the counter-revolutionary struggle. In that struggle it will prove as impotent and as half-hearted as our lingering feudal classes. The feudal classes have broken through centuries and there is now little left to take them seriously as a force that would fight the revolution. The Indian capitalist classes have, on the other hand, broken rather too suddenly. They rose to the acme of their power and pelf during the war and will immediately begin to fall.

If we ponder over these fundamental changes that are in some respects yet in process of coming to the surface, we must at once realise that they call for essential changes in our strategy and tactics and slogans. The old tactics of protests and demands and local and partial struggles were very good as methods of intensifying the class struggle. They were very good weapons in the days of propaganda. But they are outworn, they will even do terrible harm when the moment has arrived for political action, for the attainment of power. We may now use the old weapons only to the detriment of the cause of the Indian masses and to the benefit of the opponents of the freedom of our people, to the benefit of our Indo-British fascist masters.

Now, the forces ranged on either side in our struggle are the Indian masses on the one hand and British capitalism on the other. On the side of the latter is a section of Indian capitalists as well as some feudal lords, the native princes among them. In between are another section of Indian capitalists and some landholders, big and small, with their interests and affections divided, but as time passes, disappointment makes them transfer their sympathies.

Each of these forces again has its political machinery of

fight—political party fighting its battle. The Indian masses have got their one political party, the Indian National Congress. On the other hand British capital has its imperialist machinery. And as sections of Indian feudalism and capitalism are arrayed on its side, British imperialism finds it advantageous to push their parties, namely, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League to the front. As for the forces in the middle, that is, the sections of the Indian landlords and Indian capitalists, who find their sympathies divided, they found their party, in the past, in the Liberal Federation. But as the revolutionary crisis deepens, there is little place for the parties in the middle. And these classes are being compelled to transfer their sympathies either to British imperialism or to the Indian National Congress. There will, of course, be constant shiftings of sympathies and alignment and re-alignment of forces.

III

TRANSFORMATION OF RELATIONSHIPS

We have spoken of the Indian capitalist classes disintegrating. That is happening under the stress of the peculiar conditions obtaining in the India of today. But it is going to be a world phenomenon due to other causes operating elsewhere. We have seen the destructive effect of atomic energy during the last war. Scientists are already dreaming of its creative qualities. They think, there is no reason why that energy cannot be used for industrial purposes. Science is not remaining idle for a moment. And there is every chance that this dream will be fulfilled sooner than many of us laymen suppose.

But taking for granted that that is a distant or even idle dream, the industrial efficiency that has already been achieved behind the scene in the belligerent countries is a fact beyond dispute. It is almost immediately to emerge into view in an unprecedented glut of products. That achievement has been beyond the dreams of past ages. On the other hand, it is, as we have shown before, a menace to the wage-earners all over the world. But we may not stop there. It is a menace to the capitalist class itself. Indeed, it menaces the very existence of the capitalists as a class. It threatens to reduce them to the minimum, literally to a handful, of monopolists. The atomic energy, coming into productive use, only brings about a leap, only spurts up the climax.

The capitalist mode of production, as Marx saw, came

into being by introducing a breach between labour power and the means of production. In course of its fullest development, it has now brought about the widest hiatus between the two. On the one side there remain a few capitalists in the monopoly possession of all the means of production ; on the other, vast masses of humanity with labour power but nothing to use it upon. In that hiatus, as in the crater of a volcano in irruption, go down not merely the overwhelming numbers of the erstwhile wage-earners and many in the middle, formerly living on unproductive labour, but also a large proportion of the whilom employers of labour. Thus the emergence of strange bed-fellows is not a mere vision of the mystic Gandhi. His theory of the transformation of relationships would appear no more than an ethical dogma to-day to one variety of Marxists. It is those whose dialectics of social development was interred in the same grave with Marx.

The Real Problem

To bridge the hiatus is the central problem before the present revolutionary epoch. A revolution always follows upon a crisis and forestalls another, a worse one. In the hands of the residual class of capitalists, there is a more deadly monopoly than that of the atom bomb. It is the power to inflict crises—food crises and cloth crises—through man-made famines. These crises are capable of being created through the monopoly over the money market. The few monopoly capitalists of the world will be exercising monopoly control over the fascist States and through them also over the money market. Through that machinery they will be inflicting crisis after crisis.

That mechanism may be very effective in killing masses of men, in demoralising them, in keeping them down for a while submissive to the fascist order. But it will prove hardly effective for the purpose for which it is intended. It cannot improve trade prospects in an ocean of low purchasing power. Nor can the "world food pool" through inflation and monopoly procurement and rationing and control expand trade. Many seem to think, that is the reasonable way to it. But it is not even a plausible excuse for it. Thus trade, when there is no purchasing power, creates an insoluble conundrum for the monopoly capitalists.

It is not, however, expected that faced with the conundrum, the monopolists would come to their senses and give up the monopoly. It only indicates the full maturity of the revolutionary conditions, in that it disposes of the *raison d'être* for all the counter-revolutionary violence on the part of the monopolists. Their man-slaughter yields them no earthly gain. Human intelligence cannot fail to perceive it. It cannot fail to see that these diabolical methods continue to carry society from absurdity to absurdity, from evil to worse evil through sheer inertia, through the habit of hoping against hope, hope to see trade revive under the present conditions. Thus the transformation of relationships expands and has the potentiality of holding in its embrace even the monopolists. This is what in the foregoing section has been called class struggle arriving at the stage of class elimination, that is, even the highest class is no longer to be a solid class. It is left in a state of uncertainty. That would draw it to the position of a house divided against itself. It means the weakening of the inevitable counter-revolutionary violence.

The Basic Solution

But the absence of *raison d'être* for counter-revolutionary violence is not likely to deter the monopolists from the use of violence. Nor can the revolutionary wait for good sense dawning upon them. His task is clearly indicated if there is a clear grasp of the fundamentals of the present revolutionary situation. The crux of the situation is the chasm between labour power and the means of production. The present revolutionary conditions grow out of the fact that the width of the chasm has gone to the farthest limits. If the masses have been rendered utterly helpless simply because they have not at their disposal the means of producing their livelihood, the revolutionist's task also lies in arming every individual with such means. That brings out the revolutionary significance of the Congress constructive programme.

When all the means of production are concentrated in the hands of the few privileged, the revolution demands that the monopoly must be broken. That can be done only when every individual, even the poorest, possesses his own means of production and ceases to depend even partially on the monopolists. That bridges up in respect of every individual the hiatus, artificially brought about by capitalism and in the interest of the capitalist classes. It may be that in some countries, the poorest may find, individually, or collected in small co-operatives, some independent means of production capable of yielding a better standard of living than the *charka*. But not in India. We must not judge by our class prejudices, predilections and standards. In order to have the right perspective, we must have our eyes constantly fixed on the common man of India.

The picture of the struggle the Congress constructive pro-

gramme envisages has been indicated before. The common man, earning his own livelihood and living in co-operation with his neighbours in a self-contained locality, builds up in it the most widely diffused apparatus of struggle against the modern form of capitalist state and society. Such localities emerge into resistant republics. They neither take any boons from nor render any service to the capitalist master. They neither depend on his goods or jobs, nor supply his armed might, nor accept his money whether in gold or in token. That is the deadliest form of struggle that can under present conditions be conceived against capitalism when there is no more quarry for it to work in, when there is no further potentiality left for it to explore on any side whatever. Capitalism can live but on trade. When it wants to carry on trade, oblivious of the fact that there is no purchasing power, it needs the shock of a direct refusal, of active, determined and persistent non-co-operation on the part of the entire community organised into small self-sufficient republics.

Freedom First—Plenty Next

The new society in its incipient form thus comes into being even as an apparatus of struggle. The new order is born. The instruments of struggle, that is, the self-sufficient village units shape themselves into a form of *Panchayet Raj*, into co-operative commonwealths—free commonwealths of free men living on free exchange of their own produce. But these are poor commonwealths to start with. The common man has for the time being to do without the plenty that machine has placed at man's disposal. In the name of plenty, machine has thus far only enslaved and impoverished. The plenty that machine yields has up

till now remained somewhat of a Tantalus's allurements to the common man. Rather than plenty he would have freedom for the first thing. To Marx "machinery does not merely function as a mighty competitor, ever ready to make the wage-earners superfluous. It is also a power directly hostile to the wage-workers." In his turn, the wage-worker now starts by making machinery superfluous.

All the same, machinery has come to stay. It is too late in the day to ask mankind to forego the plenty that it caters. But machinery is at present the master, man its slave. Machinery takes its proper place, it becomes man's servant only when profit motive has been eliminated, only when capitalist exploitation has made its exit, only when the hiatus that capitalism has caused between labour power and the means of production has been bridged. To Marx, even as to Gandhi, "the supreme consideration is man". Until he is freed, there is no plenty to make his life one of joy and enlightenment. Only when freedom is assured, when productive relations have changed, when the means of production have come into the actual labourers' possession, into the community's collective possession, when social relations cease to be one of master and slaves, one of mutual competition and has become one of co-operation and mutual helpfulness and brotherliness, man will know how to make the best use of machinery, how to acquire and enjoy plenty to the best advantage of the community as a whole. The common man breaks machinery until he can make use of machinery instead of machinery using him.

A new order needs as well as shapes a new type of man. The socialist conception visualised that new type emerging when socialist production of plenty would do away with perpetual want and competitive relations. But capitalism having

since taken a more complicated form under fascism, the programme, and with it, the technique of struggle against it has changed. And with that change, several other possibilities have come into the vista.

Classless Society Emerges

It has been hinted before that under the new conditions, the programme of seizure of power has evolved into one of building up of power. As a corollary follows a change in the technique. That will be discussed later on. The new technique develops a new man because of the unarmed might it calls for, because of the organised will it requisitions, because of the retaliatory spirit it abhors, because of the willing self-suffering it entails, because of the mutual co-operation and mutual dependence unto death it fosters and finally because of the spirit of brotherly love and sacrifice it engenders.

Again, under a comparatively simpler form of capitalism, it was legitimately held that socialist production would precede the elimination of the State. But a new programme and a new technique having meanwhile taken the field, it is quite on the cards that there will be a transposition in historical sequence. The apparatus of decentralised, self-contained localities coming into being for, and through, the struggle against fascism may quite conceivably persist in that form and undertake socialist production of plenty. That form of what we have called co-operative commonwealth or *Panchayet raj* may be without, or may soon be shorn of, the character of a *raj*—the present class relations being obliterated meanwhile, the rudiments of a classless society emerging, the relation of co-operation taking the place of the present relation of competition and the new type of man making

its appearance. Such *Panchayets* after the final crash of the present order may continue as free economic councils unifying in higher and higher bodies for economic co-operation based on a planned system of production and distribution for the whole of humanity. Such *Panchayet raj* may begin even at an earlier stage to divest itself of the character of the existing State forms with the usual type of police and standing army and bureaucracy.

IV

THE TECHNIQUE OF SATYAGRAHA

A mutiny, an uprising, or even a war of national independence may be a mere matter of a conspiratorial arrangement. It may achieve its objective by a mere fluke. You stumble upon a heap of firearms and there may be an uprising. But not so a revolution. A revolution proceeds out of deeper social causes. Those causes determine the character of the revolution, its course, its technique, its programme, its strategy, its organisation. They determine the character of its leadership. • They almost pre-determine these—pre-determine in the sense that we cannot see all the billions of forces that are at play and are tangled up inextricably.

This is not the place to discuss all the aspects of our revolution. We can simply indicate its nature. It is not for nothing that our leadership partakes of the character of the half-naked fakir, of the simplest peasant of our land. It is not for nothing that our leadership speaks in a language akin rather to that of the illiterates of India than to that our English-educated gentlemen would love to use. Under our peculiar conditions—both in time and zone—declassed leadership has taken the form that it has. Our history has shaped it so, whether we like it or not. History repeats itself only in a very superficial and restricted sense. For the rest, it simply refuses to mimic itself. It is of unequal growth from place to place. It operates differently from age to age, even from decade to decade. The deeper economic causes, of course, unfailingly

move history onwards but not in the same way. They are of unceasing and diverse growth, almost bafflingly so.

It is not for nothing again that in our revolution, there is so much insistence on non-violence. It is no mere fad of an individual. In Marx's day, in England, in France, in Germany, the workers in the factories were the revolutionary army. Lenin added peasants to them. But at the present moment, particularly in our land, the unemployed and the partly unemployed threaten to outnumber the two great sections taken together. Besides, anybody may be unemployed any moment. As against this, our revolutionary programme places the means of production in the hands of every individual, be he a peasant, or worker or unemployed. He is to wield it as a weapon—both offensive and defensive weapon—against the capitalists who hold the monopoly. He is thus to carry on the revolutionary struggle, the war of attrition. This points the way to a victorious revolution in our time and primarily also in our clime. It contemplates in its sweep every individual in the nation barring ultimately perhaps the few blind monopolists. It is thus the 'greatest revolution of all ages, the most democratic one.

Dangerous Half-way House

There is hardly any room for such a revolution to depend on any chance, to depend on the accident of the find of a collection of firearms. You cannot simply arm the entire masses. If at all, you can perchance arm a section. But that halfway house, instead of being helpful, is a dangerous expedient at the present moment. It is a far more likely help to counter-revolution than to revolution. Whole classes in the society are in the melting pot. And there are so many

forces at play, aspirations striving in so many spheres to revive, or cling to, interests rapidly crumbling down, there is every chance that an armed section of the people will assert its power over the masses no less ruthlessly than the present masters, may be, even in alliance with them.

Supposing during these days of unrest, or, in case of a future Russo-British war coming about, a Native State, or a party like the Mahasabha or the League or the Communist Party attempts an armed conflict somewhat of a serious nature, Britain may not prove averse to come easily to terms with it and recognise such a puppet. Indeed, she is even in search of such a subservient partner to lend plausibility to her fascist rule over the Indian masses. And the party concerned, in its turn, conscious of the inferiority of its arms and armed might, will easily accept the rôle of a subordinate mandarin. Such a State will be even more brazen-facedly oppressive than British rule without camouflage. It will be national in complexion but thoroughly anti-national in character, it will hold its sway by pitilessly suppressing the overwhelming masses of the nation.

Under the prevailing circumstances, it cannot do otherwise for exactly the same reasons that have been taking our present rulers that way. Conditions are such that either you break all monopoly or the monopoly breaks you, the common man of India. That is the inescapable position. Our revolution, therefore, depends on the strength of the entirety of the masses. That strength can never conceivably be armed strength. That explains the why of the technique of Satyagraha. The masses will wear out the master by their unyielding but non-violent resistance. In this, our programme and our technique are organically linked with

each other. As has been explained before, our programme with its emphasis on village products is essentially one of building up of power. If our opponents want to starve us into submission, we feed ourselves and refuse to submit. Thus we starve their machine, starve their trade, starve their State, starve them of their profit and bring them down to condescend to be our fellow human beings.

A Flood of Light

Our last struggle, the glorious mass upsurge of August, 1942 had thrown a flood of light on our road to the goal. It lit up the narrow pathways and bye-lanes through the jungles into our villages. No one could miss that way particularly after the man-made famine of 1943 that exposed the utter helplessness and insecurity in which our masses perpetually lived. Many, even some of the erstwhile "Leftists", held themselves ready to take to those pathways. The post-war unrest would add to their enthusiasm. Leaders also, as they came out of prison cells, gave the call. But the wily imperialist proved a better student of our politics. He anticipated events. He knew the ways we would take to after the experiences of '42 and '43. He drew screen after screen over the flood-light.

First came the elections, then came the cock-and-bull story of terrorism, then came the I.N.A. trials. They were all designed to deflect Congressmen's attention and energies. They turned people's heads—even some of the mature heads of leaders. The story of terrorism and the I.N.A. trials swept the feet off the reality. Younger generations, and even some who should have known better, once again began to dream dreams.

Screens

We all know how panicky imperialism invariably is about these political conspiracy trials, even very petty trials. We also know that, left to the methods he invariably follows, the imperialist would hold the present trials in connection with one of history's most romantic episodes not anywhere in India but in distant Singapore or Rangoon with a tight brake applied on Press and publicity. We are all proud of the noble attempt that Subhas Chandra made. It is a time-honoured path that he trod. Politically speaking, we may not raise the question that things time-honoured are often time-barred in history. Subhas Chandra would succeed if his entry into India at the head of the Azad Hind Fauz synchronised with the August upheaval when the people of India practically as a whole were ready to seize power and make the intruders quit India. But it is one thing to appreciate what some of our countrymen did. It is quite a different thing to try to understand why the imperialist decided to hold these trials at all and that in Delhi and not elsewhere. The results of the trials, it would be readily admitted, did not prove commensurate with the fanfare accompanying them.

Even the flat, drab sort of charges laid against the detenus are often severely forbidden all publicity. Few seemed to have paused to think why the imperialist chose otherwise in the case of the I.N.A. trials. We have arrived at a stage when we must give up the habit of ascribing imperialist ways to accidents and personal whims and idiosyncracies. These are often mere glossy covers for carefully prepared plans and policies behind. The imperialist in this case chose to hold the trials as he did, for one thing, to make use to his best advantage of the existing confusion between a revolution

and a war of independence. He succeeded a good deal in this direction. Already, people making headway on the path of revolution have turned back to follow the other path. The village and the constructive programme have already lost at least some of the charm it had lately enjoyed. These trials have stirred up the sea of unrest. They have been sending waves after waves reaching, so far, the R.I.N. men on the coasts of Bombay and Karachi. It is rather easy to deal with restless waves than with the baffling calm of the sea.

British Labour's Experiment

Appearances are often misleading. The forces underlying the situation are not taking their natural course, or are slow to take the course as anticipated in these lines for reasons that are not fundamental. The people of Britain know that the post-war days would be difficult days for their trade. Churchill won the war for them. But Churchill would not prove a safe man to handle their trade through these difficult days. So he with his party was given an ungrateful farewell. The Labour Party was entrusted with the impossible task of continuing to manage the trader nation's trade even after the last war, when profit motive had become wholly anachronic. Labour, in order to conscientiously fulfil the task entrusted to it, has been making an experiment. It has been trying to conciliate the peoples of the colonial and dependent countries. A Cabinet Mission is to make a deal with India. Elections have been held. The Congress has come to power virtually in all the provinces barring two. So, for the time being, a fascist rule or the rule by ruthless suppression has been held in check. And strike fever or any other form of

post-war unrest that would normally be otherwise handled is receiving patient consideration. But the experiments in the long run are most likely to prove abortive in all directions. That is the logic of circumstances. The Governments both in India and in Britain will then undergo sudden and even violent change of complexion.

Besides, the lesson of Jallinwalabag had gone home. To suppress the post-war unrest, the imperialist would not this time create moral impression at one place for the rest of India. Shootings would be isolated and chronic, and would exceed in ruthlessness the needs and excuses in particular situations. So it happened in Calcutta, so it happened in Bombay, so it happened in Karachi, so it has been happening elsewhere. It is more than time, we gauge the situation calmly and proceed warily. We needed being goaded and excited in the first decades of the century. Not today. But beware when the imperialist deliberately creates causes for us to get excited. He excites and we get excited. This is just not developing the antithesis but simply getting into his trap. We pelt and he shoots.

Leftism and Violence

Is that what is meant by "Leftism"? Is Leftism synonymous with foolhardiness? Bragging or threat of the use of violence, when we have not the means to do violence, may help getting up a group of middle class youngmen, but it will definitely weaken the struggle, betray the cause in the circumstances of to-day. Revolution is a serious business and is something far away from our Leftist mock-heroics. Shouting and cursing and threatening are just not playing the revolutionary. Rather pretty often the coward. That

was evident during the November firing in Calcutta. The habitual stage-thunderers kept carefully away when the students calmly faced the bullets. Some senior advised Upton Sinclair, "Never use force, Upton, until you have got enough of it." We should prove so many fools if we feel complimented when *Reuters* reports an obscure Indonesian paper speaking in praise of the R. I. N. men using violence. We should by now have some idea as to whom *Reuters* serves and some knowledge of the kind of news *Reuters* caters to and about India.

We must once for all get away from the idea that a revolution is the same as the use of violence. You have simply not the capacity to use it. And if *you* use it, but the masses are left without the means to use it, you are not a revolutionist, but probably a racketeer. In India, the revolutionist used it in days gone by as a means of propaganda by action, when self-immolation of individuals or groups was to him the road to an arduous process of national awakening. Other times, other methods. The present is time to think of achievement, not of awakening. Now the masses are at your beck and call. You criminally mislead one seeking your guidance if you ask him to throw a missile at the passing policeman. He was possibly a brave man when he came to you for lead. You help demoralising him when he with his near and dear ones suffers a hundred times the violence that he was ever capable of using.

Betrayal of Masses

There are more things in the Indian situation to-day than we usually care to ponder over. The imperialist is more than ever ready to deal the heaviest blow. He only

wants the semblance of an excuse. On the other hand, the nation's leadership, rightly or wrongly, has chosen the path of non-violence. If you think it has chosen the wrong path, it is up to you to approach and persuade the leadership to abandon it. Until you have been able to do so, you have no right to incite the masses into acts of violence. If you do so you betray the national organisation, you betray the masses. The path of the leadership being what it is, the imperialist, even if he has never been a lover of non-violence, would find in your act a moral justification to adopt any and every measure to deal with violence. And in its name he would impose the cruelest measures to perfect his fascistic scheme of things. Your only achievement will then be that in between the imperialist and the national leadership, your beloved masses would suffer and their cause would be hindered.

Lest it may not find enough excuse or scope to use the amount of violence it wants to, British imperialism is already shaping—following the fascist and Nazi methods—parties of violence out of the classes in direct or indirect alliance with it. This was evident during the recent elections when some Muslim League people committed any number of acts of organised violence with impunity. The Communist Party of India is likely in near future to follow suit with cudgel and castor oil. Some groups again have taken to the pastime of communist baiting. They are only helping the so-called communists to regain sympathy and popularity, and besides, giving them the excuse to take to organised violence in their turn. The C. P. people have already started the game with an amount of cruelty hitherto unknown. Thus these groups will follow each other—as they did in the past—until they

are all drilled into full-fledged Black-shirt and S.S. forces. The fascist mode of running the State is perfecting itself anyway. But it is no part of our business to help it. Our task is to destroy it.

V THE DISSOLUTION OF THE MIDDLE CLASS

We give ourselves a label and the vanity of the label often leads us where we do not know. Sometimes it leads us even to suicide. We call ourselves revolutionists, we commit political suicide if we play into the hands of counter-revolution and fascism. We love to take the label of Leftism. That is perfectly understandable. But we must find out both from dictionary and history what Leftism means. Does it consist in the advocacy of immediate struggle? Does it consist in speaking of blood and sword? Either course is sometimes a symptom of political illiteracy—whether it is the advocacy of a struggle before there are objective and subjective conditions mature for it ; or it is shouting about or threatening with the use of violence when we have not the wherewithal for it. Either is a foolish course that helps not the revolution but counter-revolution.

Leftism is the advocacy of democracy. The broader the democracy you feel and act for, the more to the Left you are. In the Congress, Congressmen knowing what they stand for, there is simply no room for the division into Left and Right. If the masters are building up the atom bomb brand of fascism, we are building up its antithesis the *charka* brand of democracy. If they want that power must belong to the upper handful, our revolution delivers power to the common man. In the attempt then to go farther to the Left, we just walk over, by the law of two extremes meeting, to the extreme Right and possibly dye our shirts brown.

Our Leftism has a sociological background to it, even as our leadership has. Neither is an accident of history. In fact, history abhors such accidents.

We have spoken earlier of our landowning and capitalist classes breaking down and sections of them allying themselves either with the Congress or with alien imperialism. Corresponding developments have taken place in the life of our middle classes also. With the decline of the landholding middle classes under the East India Company's rule, there arose a service-holding middle class. The potentiality of this class also was exhausted by the first decades of the present century. The rise of the revolutionary movements was its direct outcome. Then the shock of the World War of 1914-18 caused a sharp break-down of all these classes simultaneously.

Middleclass Parties

Meanwhile, the unrest following upon that war brought Gandhiji to the fore. Under his leadership, the Congress showed the first symptoms of an attempt at a mass revolution. The imperialist grew alert. Its search for neutralising elements nearabout, or if possible within, the Congress ranks, began as early as 1920-21. The search was not altogether a fruitless one at least in Bengal. It found a more suitable party a few years later. With consummate care and skill it began nurturing the Indian Communist Party. The notorious barricades of espionage and customs and censorships being there for nothing, it would be impossible for the party to superimpose itself on the country except with the connivance of British imperialism. It required more than mere connivance for this party of the tottering middle classes of India to come up to its present position.

The soil was of course prepared and fertile. The middle classes have naturally been, these decades, in a yet more desperate plight than the upper classes. They would cling madly and even blindly to their vanishing interests. From the earlier revolutionists they came to learn that it was British imperialism that reduced the Indian people to their present plight. They began cursing British imperialism.

But mere cursing was in vain. They saw that the Indian National Congress was fighting British imperialism. They also saw that in course of fighting imperialism the Congress got semblance of power in certain restricted spheres on the lowest rungs. They gloated when they saw some Congressmen preening their nests, in those spheres. They saw a ray of hope in the enveloping darkness ; perhaps they could regain or retain some of their petty prestige in their parish. They eagerly joined the Congress.

Wrath Against Congress

But there are not jobs and contracts enough to go round. And the Congress was more pre-occupied with other business than providing these English-educated gentlemen with jobs. The rage that British imperialism had excited changed its focus. A good deal of the wrath was now directed against the Congress. They continued cursing. And they were allowed to curse even more vehemently, for, this time they did not know whom they were cursing more—British imperialism or the Congress. And thus they became “Leftists.”

But we have anticipated events. The term “Leftist” as well as the full development of the phase we have just

described came later. The head appeared first and the tail—rather the innumerable tails, the innumerable splinter groups—followed it only during the last part of the last decade. The Communist Party of India, with its borrowed doctrine of a bourgeois democratic revolution preceding a mass revolution, fostered on the wrath of the middle classes both against British imperialism and the Congress. The Party needed only some opportunity for martyrdom in a conspiracy trial, some opportunity for propaganda through it, a little manipulation of the policy of political persecution, of internment and externment of workers both of this party and of its opponents, a little halo around it for being declared illegal and being allowed, without much hindrance, to function illegally for a time. It got all-found arrangements. Through such opportunities and with its borrowed slogans and pretensions of being an international as well as secret party, it cast a spell over the younger sections of the middle and lower middle classes. It now began to entertain aspirations to come up as a rival to the Congress as a mass party. And at a moment of crisis it proved worthy of the care bestowed on it for near about two decades.

Meanwhile, other "Leftist" sections came up through a different channel and became its camp-followers. They had quite a different history. They are mostly a cross between the Communist Party and the Nationalist Party of 1934. When the Hoare-Willington Scheme of Reforms was on the anvil, the Hindu middle and lower middle classes raised a hue and cry not so much against the other reactionary aspects of the scheme as against the Communal Award. The reason is obvious. The fundamental problem before these classes is one of jobs and seats and contracts. The

Award offered such favours not in the same proportion to their monopoly holders for generations as to the Muslims. The imperialist had his own motive. But the Revolution also would gain inasmuch as the benefits resulting from the Award would help the quick rise of a Muslim middle class. The Congress leadership perceived that it would be all to the good. Because circumstances were such that the middle classes could not stand ; a Muslim middle class of some size, if it emerged, would disintegrate almost with its rise and a revolutionary ferment would soon permeate through the Muslim middle classes to the Muslim masses. So the Congress leadership would not agitate exclusively against the Award as the Hindu upper classes urged.

The Communal Leftists

The job-hunters from these classes raised a scream as if diddled out of a cherished heirloom. The Congress leadership with its gaze fixed on the revolution in the interest of the common man remained unperturbed. The situation suited the Communist Party admirably. It seized the opportunity to set up the vocal section of the people against the Congress leadership. It imported slogan after slogan from its headquarters for many years now in Great Britain. In slogan-mongering it excelled the other "Leftist" groups and found its leadership over them all. The slogans culminated in the one of "immediate struggle". Immediate struggle to these middle class people meant immediate jobs. So it was very popular.

Imperialism had not miscalculated. Its Vickerses and Zaharoffs had been preparing the war and thus it knew in time when the war was breaking out. It knew that India

was a permanently famished country and that the impact of the war would create revolutionary conditions. So it set about getting the two elements—subjective and objective conditions—needed for it divorced from each other. The objective condition would not mature during the first months or even the first years of the war, when the war would rather lead to a comparative betterment of the conditions of the masses. That was the moment when it suited imperialism's interest best to get the subjective side fritter away in petty outbursts. Everything worked according to plan.

While the Congress was thinking in terms of a revolution and consistently pursuing the technique suited to it, the Leftist groups, actuated by the impatience of their class, long in the smelting furnace, wanted some form of an action mimicking the past, clamoured for an immediate fight, some demonstration, a riot, somehow filling up of jails, or at least, some form of a threat. The threat imperialism got even if not formally delivered. At least it got the excuse not to leave outside of jail elements that might prove troublesome during a war. It felt relieved and the party, that harvested the relief for it, was left outside—some even in scarcely unknown hiding places—to render further service. That service they rendered later by declaring the "People's War".

In Spite of the Leftists

So the Congress had to function in spite of the Leftists. In spite of and without them, it launched the great "Quit India" movement. The most suitable time for it to be launched would be about April-May of 1943, that is, on the eve of the Bengal famine. But the Japanese invading force

came up on India's borders. And if fresh subjugation came and unless Indians began to feel immediately that India was their land, they would take ages again to grow the spirit of resistance afresh. So the order issued from the nation: Quit India.

When this glorious struggle on the part of the common man of India was on, some people belonging to several of the so-called Leftist groups got into it, but got into it as if by the backdoor. They evinced no leadership, no power of initiative or of organisation. They generally worked without understanding the programme of seizure of power and worked rather against the Congress spirit. They wanted as if to fish in troubled waters. They worked with the sole objective of gathering some asset as a justification for the future continuance of their particular groups. As for the head of the Leftist groups, that is, the Communist Party, it waged a "People's war" against the people's struggle for freedom. It clearly showed which people the sponsors of this people's war belonged to. Its rôle in the infliction of the man-made famine on the people of Bengal also showed, which people it belonged to. If there was any doubt yet left on that score, can its latest slogan be also attributed to a mere accident? Is its call for the Congress-League unity—a call from a Marxist (!) party—merely the result of some misjudgment? It must be noticed, the call is identical with the insistence on the part of imperialists of all brands. Even as it is the desire of the imperialist, the simple purpose of the slogan is to destroy the national character of the common man's organisation of India, the Congress. No party with the vaguest Marxist pretensions could raise this cry

with any amount of honesty. The unity between a mass organisation and an organisation of all manner of upper class aspirations cannot certainly make for strength. The unity of plus two with minus two does not add to its potency. There can be no unity between a party of the capitalists of Britain with that of the masses of India.

As has been shown in an earlier section, the upper classes of India are in the process of breaking into two. Some of their parties are allying themselves with the capitalists of Britain while sections of them are being compelled by circumstance to come over to the side of the Congress. The same process has been working even faster among the Indian middle classes. The reason is natural and simple. In the present context, the middle class has no place as the middle class. It must either through the Indian National Congress come down to the service of the common man of India or through the Leftist blocks go over to the service of the British imperialist,—the same way as the Radical Democratic Party has gone. All halfway houses are closed in the atom bomb society. People developing a spirit of suspicion and antagonism towards the declassed leadership of the Congress are more likely than not to find themselves ultimately in the imperialist's camp,—one way or the other playing into the imperialist's hands. The middle classes to belong to India, must frankly recognise that they are of the masses of India and with them even as they are with their families. The natural transformation of relationships will carry the others over to Britain, not in body, but certainly in spirit.

VI AT A MATURE STAGE

The devastating bomb is dropped from a range too high above the capacity of our vocal pyrotechnics. The imperialist merely titters. Our middle class politics of threats does not touch him. He is securely armoured against any reality that we may ever dream of translating any of our threats into. Besides, we should ourselves feel ridiculous. Brave words befitting the child of 1905 and 1910 ought to scandalise the grown-up man of 1945 and 1950. Hard words and bitter criticisms seem wholly out of tune with the maturity the movement has attained. "Quit India" is not a *Mantra*. And *Mantras* ceased to work even in divine literature centuries ago. "Delhi Chalo" is more than a mere provocative slogan. Thrust it at the British official, he will parry it with "Jai Hind".

The time for holding *hartals* and street demonstrations and shouting slogans is gone by. They were methods to accentuate the class struggle and anti-imperialist struggle. We have nothing more to accentuate now. We have to achieve. We have something more serious to do. Slogan-mongering is an easier business than seriously to think of a particular situation. The common run of people would prefer imitating the past. They forget that the technique of one revolution cannot always be imported into another. Nay, to do so is often to play the anti-revolutionist's rôle. There was a successful revolution in Russia in 1917. Thoughtless people would therefore swear by every slogan, every text out

of that chapter of history. It was not by such methods and such people that power was seized and held by those who ran the 'Jatiya Sarkar' at Mahisadal.

We have come beyond the days even of that 'Jatiya Sarkar'—of the sudden realisation of such 'Sarkar'. We have arrived at the stage when a 'Jatiya Sarkar' must be silently and patiently built up in every village throughout the country. Such a 'Sarkar' not being suddenly realised will be incapable of being suddenly broken up. It will endure and will stand bullets and jailings. It will be broad-based—it will have the broadest possible basis—every individual being conscious and self-supporting.

We may not flinch at the immediate drudgery involved and may not seek to cover up that flinching by brave words and Marxian pretensions. That drudgery is an ancient tale and no more than apparent. In a revolutionary situation, the tempo of things—whether in breaking or building up—is of growth in geometrical progression, whereas it is in arithmetic at other times.

Programme Suited to the Hour

We are building up the instruments of the revolution, that is, the self-sufficient villages in the midst of objective and subjective conditions that are fully revolutionary. The objective conditions arise from the sharp crisis—food crisis and cloth crisis. People have a desperate urge to get over the crises that are going to be of frequent repetition. We may not be waiting, wistfully looking for food we are begging from international sources. Food we may get from there. But food will be meanwhile disappearing from our home—giving some fillip to the drooping shipping trade of Britain

importing food for us and exporting food from us. The same applies to cloth. Our produce may go to China and Britain's will come to us.

Meanwhile, brothers and sons remain famished, or die of hunger ; mothers and sisters remain naked, perhaps commit suicide. There is the desperate call of the distressed. This is the moment to follow the track into the villages.

The necessary human material is also ready at hand. We witnessed it demonstrated on the Dhurrumtola Street in November last, when students faced bullets as bravely as they had seldom done before. That human material out of the older middle classes now instinctively feels where it stands, it knows its fate is now irrevocably tied down to the common people of India. It is conscious, it has no more any position in the middle. The middle class as such is eliminated.

The middle class in India will now belong to Britain. It is almost wholly Britain's creation. It will have at its centre the war rich. Whatever business and professions there will be room left for in the coming days will generally be at the mercy of British capital and will be carried on under the patronage of the British imperialist. For the rest, the middle class will be artificially propped up by the imperialist through superfluous jobs created and works undertaken. It will know, it is artificially propped up by the imperialist and will hence remain beholden to him. It will be largely bound up to him as his "essential services". The "National War Front" will continue to have a shadow existence and fight the nation. The middle position is thus assigned to those who have loyally served the imperialist during the last war and will be loyally serving his fascist order.

The Inverted Leftists

Some older sections will remain in the new middle class. They will feel, they are unable to maintain their old position and yet they would fondly cling to it. They would rather cling to Britain in that desperate attempt. Hence they will be generally inspired by an anti-Congress bias. Such bias as we see around us is no accident of history. It is wrong to suppose this bias proceeds out of inadequate understanding of what the Congress stands for. The understanding is rather quite sufficient that the Congress stands for the common man's revolution and not for a middle class upspring. The middle class is thus easily upset. Its prospects vanish into thin air. The resultant anger puts on a more respectable cloak. It fights as if the patient ways of the Congress—patient ways that the Congress is called upon to follow in the interest of the common man's revolution.

Traditionally and culturally, the whole of this middle class is not what we ordinarily understand by the middle class. It is an upstart class. Even those in it who come from the older middle classes, in their desperate state, will come to share all the characteristics of an upstart class. That was evident the other day in the murder attended with blood-curdling brutality of a student in Mymensingh. The crime took place in connection with the election to the legislature of a scion of a very old land-owning family. The rising fascism will find enough material in these classes to work against the Congress, the common man's party, that, they feel, threatens their interest. These classes will produce any number of inverted Leftists—the variety of Leftists we have got in our politics. The glory the Azad Hind Fauz achieved will provide some of them with a false plea to function not

as Congressmen pure and simple but as "Leftist" Congressmen. This sort of falsehood supplied the foundation for fascist growth elsewhere also.

On the other hand, those from the older middle classes, who are not as blind, will see that, lingering in the middle, they will help neither themselves nor the nation as a whole. These will supply that exquisite human material, unarmed but undaunted before death, that now belongs to the common man of India. That material must not be misused. It must not be allowed to waste shouting empty slogans and holding vain demonstrations. It must not be lured by brave words into the blind alley of 1939. The imperialist has been up to the trick of deflecting its attention and energy. Chained by our Leftist pretensions we must not be helping the imperialist in his game. That tremendous stock of vibrant energy must be directed to the one appropriate channel of building up the instruments without which there is no revolution in the conditions of to-day. It must be diverted from the bustle of our city streets into the quiet pathways floodlighted by 1942. That is the revolutionary task to-day.

The Task Remains

This task must immediately be undertaken in spite of the fact that a Cabinet Mission is just now at work in India. Let us hope for the best. But let us also understand the position. The capitalist of Britain, in endless pursuit of his own tail—trade and market and colony and war, and more war and more colony and more trade—has forgotten that he has almost fully exhausted the chance of further trade. He has brought the trader nation's trade to such straits that she must now desperately try every expedient to resuscitate it.

As one such expedient, she has sent Labour to power. The British people want to try if Labour can drag them out of the depths. And Labour, in its turn, is trying the expedient of reconciling India and thus to revive trade with India. No harm trying.

But there is a snag. Faced with the tremendous problems that India is, she is incapable of being reconciled with half-measures. And to reconcile India to the extent that she must be, Britain cannot stand on her present social system—these two cannot go hand in hand together. Britain, as she is, cannot simply make the two ends meet without India. To manage without India, she must go completely socialist. And that socialism cannot be merely of the nationalisation variety. It must be of the Soviet variety. Halting at nationalisation, Labour will merely give an incentive to fascism.

But Labour failing in its present mission to India and failing to revive Britain's trade through it, will spell its own doom. Deprived of her trade in India, Britain can no longer maintain her democratic façade. So, it is democratic Britain's last desperate attempt at a democratic solution of the Indian problem. Its failure is bound to have a violent repercussion on British politics. Churchill may come back. Or even Mosley may find a chance.

Reforms Also Help

Meanwhile, our Congress loses nothing by holding the present negotiations. Negotiations and compromises and reforms also help, instead of hindering, the revolution. They produce different results in different contexts. When they are meant and made to yield benefits to the upper and middle classes, they tend to demoralise and disintegrate. But our

declassed leadership, with its eyes fixed on the common man of India, may be trusted to make use of any power forthcoming in strengthening the masses in their revolutionary struggle, in instilling into the perpetually famished a greater sense of security. In their present desperate plight, that will give them the necessary confidence to carry the fight to a finish.

Gandhi says, as a Satyagrahi, ten times deceived, he will knock the eleventh time also at the deceiver's door. He would feel ashamed of such conduct if he wanted, even subconsciously, power for himself or for his class. So would Azad and Nehru, Patel and Rajendra Prasad. But they act as revolutionaries. Ten times they come back baffled, ten times they tell their constituents, the masses of India, the story of their bafflement. That is the revolutionary way. The process educates the masses. They know the deceiver; they know who keeps them deprived of the fruits of their labour. They also know how to deal with him.

Now, then, whether the peace mission succeeds or fails, our task remains. We know the measure of the probable success to its utmost limit. We have also indicated our task. With capitalism persisting, the common man of India cannot come to his own in the present world setting. It is either a new order, or the masses are crushed. But the present mission accepts for its background the present order of society, may be, with a little tinkering here and there. It does not and cannot liquidate the capitalist system, it cannot blow off the profit motive. So it cannot deflect us from our course.

VII TO THE VILLAGE

On the ultimate analysis, it is not arms and law and jail on which our slavery sustains itself. It is hunger and ignorance, and fear of hunger and fear born of ignorance. It is hunger that makes us serve the master's machine, the machine that enslaves. For fear of hunger we take to arms and batons on behalf of those who live and thrive by depriving us of our freedom. And through ignorance we serve these masters and help in the continuation of one another's servitude.

It is at the very root of our servitude then that the Congress constructive programme strikes when it provides a free meal to the common man desperately striving to live as a free man. It is again at the very root of our servitude it strikes, when our programme of basic and adult education holds up to the common villager the basic nature of our relations—relations as they are and as they should be—the relation between nation and nation, between class and class, between the individual and State and society.

Century after century mists have been carefully created. They have been elaborately spread layer upon layer over these relations in the name of religion, of philosophy, of science, of national or racial interests and so on and so forth. The task that devolves on us, the Congress workers, is to fully enlighten the democracy so that, conscious of the historical rôle of classes and groups and interests, it can fight its

uphill way to its glorious destiny, until the common man finds the position that is his by right but that he has remained cscheated of throughout the centuries.

Let us take one or two more items out of the Congress programme and examine their implications. The labourers have to be organised in their respective trade unions but under Congress auspices. In a previous section we have spoken of the labourer losing his earlier position and confidence in so far as the revolutionary struggle is concerned. The enveloping gloom of unemployment and consequent hunger are responsible for this. To draw him out of that state of depression the Congress programme provides a second occupation for him. As the struggle develops, he has to refuse to work the master's machinery so long as it remains the master's. Or alternatively, the master also may choose to close down the factory or lock him out or discharge him. He will then feed himself and his family and carry on the struggle. In fact, he begins to live as a free man and asserts his freedom. Thus is restored the labourer's revolutionary rôle.

A Revolutionary Solution

In another field our middle class hankering for jobs and seats and contracts coupled with the middle class propensity for threats and challenges has done almost incalculable harm. Pursuing these hankerings and propensities we have played into the hands of the imperialist and played a suicidal game in the matter of our dealings with the minority communities. Without service rendered to, or political education imparted among, the Muslim masses, we have latterly been indulging in frivolous threats and challenges to the Muslim League.

Some of our papers—even with Congress and Leftist pretensions—have been unseeingly poking fun at the League leaders. And what is the result? We have simply been handing over the entire community to the imperialist through the League.

The problem has thus been brought up to a stage, where there is no reformist solution to it. We must have a revolutionary solution, or none at all. And the solution that our Congress programme offers has a striking similarity with the Bolshevik solution of it. In the spirit of either, put in a nutshell, the revolutionist's solution is that he must work in such a spirit of service that while the majority community will be stressing the full right of the minority to separate, it must be the minorities from whom the demand will come for unity. No unity can be stronger.

The demand for unity by the majority community sometimes amounts to the demand for the perpetuation of whatever power and privileges it has been enjoying. That gives ground for suspicion and fear entertained by the minorities. It may be, the suspicion and fear entertained by the minorities, are not always legitimate. But the imperialist makes use of them and in doing so exaggerates the reasons for them. It, therefore, makes it obligatory for the majority community unreservedly to concede the fullest right of self-determination to the minority communities. At the same time, the majority must readily take to such life of brotherly service and educative humanitarian activities as is capable of allaying all suspicion and fear among the masses of the minority communities. Congressmen are enjoined upon by their own programme to take to such life. Besides, in every locality the two communities will live so interdependent upon each other every individual from the

minority community will live so intermingled in the social and economic life of the co-operative commonwealth, and the Congress scheme of education will place the social and class relations so clearly before him that he may not have any special charm for a separate life, nor even for the mirage of a Pakistan.

To achieve this end revolutionary Russia's prescription is: "The Bolshevik . . . must win the confidence of the native masses (of the minority nationalities), must impress them with his tact, sympathy, familiarity with local conditions. He must be open, comradely. The least trace of prejudice or patronage in his attitude is bound to cause resentment and stir suspicion." Exactly in the same vein Gandhiji advises, "a worker should enter the life of the villagers in all its aspects, serve them, help them and guide them in every way so that he could win their confidence and mould their lives in such a way as to lay down the basis of a non-violent society."

Not So Anæmic

Indeed, our whole programme is imbued with this spirit of service. The spirit of service may smack peculiarly Gandhian or mediaeval or ethical to the generality of our Marxists. But their Marxism is in a state of *rigor mortis*. The entire programme is inspired by a revolutionary outlook—an outlook that contemplates the most thorough-going revolution in all spheres of our national and social life under conditions that are yet in the process of emerging. To a revolutionary the programme is not as anaemic and inane as it is naturally to a non-revolutionary.

Nor is the task entailed on us merely eclectic. By a

transformation of relationships, we Congressmen from the upper and middle classes of India already belong to the common man of India, to the peasant, to the unemployed. We must find our natural relations in India's villages, if we do not want to belong to the capitalist of Britain, to the city of London, if we do not feel proud to be London's projections into India. If the village is unhealthy for us and dirty, it is up to ourselves to improve its conditions in co-operation with the villager. If culturally we feel like fish out of water in the village, we must be conscious of the task involved and not be lured back into the city, now the beehive of the snob and the parvenu. To educate the villager is our task as revolutionaries, as also as neighbours, friends and relations. And the Congress scheme of basic education offers the simplest and at the same time the most comprehensive means to achieve that end in the shortest possible time.

The call is then, "To the village". We have had enough of *hartals* and strikes and demonstrations—lifelong apprenticeship of it all! Quite enough of all that city bustle! We must get out of the age-old rut. Away from the city now. As at present, the city belongs to the fascist order. The village belongs to the common man, to the revolution. It does not mean that we have nothing to do in the city. But there is a very small fraction of our work there. And it concerns mainly its industrial population. Our work there centres round the creation of a second occupation for the labourer, and his education—not under the Sargeant education scheme but on the Congress model of basic *cum* adult education and under Congress auspices. As for the student, if he is a revolutionary, his revolutionary task being what it is, his organisation must

concern itself mainly with the village and in a small measure with the labour *bustee*.

Not Even After 1942

We often feel proud to imitate things Russian. But the fact of the matter is, we merely want to enjoy the flowers and fruits that Russia has been enjoying. We would enjoy but not pay the price thereof. We would reap without sowing. We ignore the soil and roots Russia cultivated and watered from fifty years before the revolution. Fifty years before the revolution the Russian youth raised the slogan "Vi Narod"—"To the People!" That movement—a very widespread movement—laid the foundation for the Soviets that came up in 1905. These Soviets became the instruments of the Russian revolution.

But we would not go to the village even after 1942. We are all proud of Mahishadal. But Mahishadal also puts us to shame. We had not many Mahishadals in the rest of India. In a sense, conditions are smoother in the India of today than they were in the Russia of the seventies of the last century. Yet village repels us, while all the time we call ourselves revolutionists. That sort of dilettantism is our upper and middle class heritage and does not make for a revolution.

The task is clear before us. All the haziness had been blown away by 1942. There could be no leadership better fitted for the task, no organisation more suitable. The subjective condition is matured by the dissolution of the upper middle classes, among whom is confined all the enlightenment our society possesses. No circumstances could be more conducive to the consolidation of a declassed leader-

ship. The maturity of the objective condition lies in the perpetual threat of a famine—a man-made famine, food famine and cloth famine. The only factor lacking is will. We must shake off our traditional habit of dependence on others, a sort of mental indolence—the same lack of will that made millions of our simple villagers die of starvation rather than help themselves with all the food that lay around them.

But if that mental laziness is to prevail, then for shame, let us cease to call ourselves revolutionists. A revolutionist is made of sterner stuff. He would forgive anything but lack of ardour in himself, the burden of tradition and dependence lying heavy on his energy and will. So then, if we have the revolutionist's spirit of self-sacrifice and suffering, we must go into the village immediately, if we have the revolutionist's zeal and determination we should make the villager begin to feel able to support himself—may be, on the poorest standard—even before the oncoming crisis overtakes him.

VIII

THE COMING UP OF THE COMMON MAN

We have spoken of the common man coming up in self-supporting village republics, of the village republics being born within the womb of the growing fascist-capitalist order of society. But let there be no illusion. The common man comes up and the capitalist goes down, the republics are born and the fascist order dies. No. History does not allow any such spontaneity. We have spoken of the transformation of relationships. The upper classes are broken, sections of them come over to the side of the masses ; the middle classes are broken, sections of them go over to the imperialist. We have spoken of the capitalist's trade prospects being fully exhausted ; we have spoken of capitalism being starved to death. By all these we have just noted down the stages of development. None of them has arrived at a clear-cut stage, none of the new is free from intermingling with the old. We are only speaking of tendencies. Of historical processes we can but talk in terms of tendencies and not of accomplished facts. Accomplished facts, even before they are accomplished, again form part of newer processes that have already started.

We contemplate the village republic as a negation of the centralised fascist order. We grow the self-supporting individual as a negation of the monopolist, we visualise the elimination of classes as a spontaneous negation of the fascist consolidation. But the class relations persist, and at the point of the actual elimination, the classes do not just step down

the stage without a last kick. And just because the kick is aimless it is all the more violent. The classes are going to be eliminated in the natural course of the development of capitalism. Capitalism deprives the masses of their purchasing power and void is created for all but the few monopolists. So, on whom can the classes wreak their last vindictive violence? They must find out some scapegoat. And in whom can they find it but in the common man, in his desperate state of hunger and nudity, coming up in the self-sufficient republic? There ensues the last phase of the struggle.

The common man is drowned again and again in blood-baths. But he is conscious of his position. He is conscious of the fading relations he is tied by to the rest of the society. He is self-confident, he is self-conscious. He comes up every time more pitilessly scornful of terrorism and death and danger.

They are his old acquaintances—terrorism and death and danger. They have been his lot throughout history. The landlords, the capitalists, the imperialists—the whole brood of exploiters have hitherto thriven on his earnings, on his scrapings from the earth. While he has earned and fed, he has been whipped and starved. He bore patiently as long as he possibly could. But the extremities of his capacity to bear have been reached. Any hell is better than dying slowly of starvation in company with one's mother and son, brother and wife dying inch by inch. He would bear no more.

Now that he has borne so much, borne so long, borne so patiently, he has gathered strength the measure of which is unknown to himself, unknown to the others. His capacity for suffering being limitless, his power of resistance also is

unbounded. If it is now in the master's power to inflict death, it is in the power of the infinitely patient common man also to welcome death and refuse to serve the master.

New Relationships

And as through these all he comes up to the stature of a giant, the others go down the pit looking askance at him. Land is his because he tills it. He tills it to support himself. He does not mind if others also till and support themselves. When hell-fire could not make him till the land for the landlord, nor part with the fruit thereof, the landlord for sheer hunger came down to plough the neighbouring piece. The giant received him with a smile of love. They were both producers and hence comrades belonging to the same class. The class distinction vanished.

The factory remained closed for long. The technician, the engineer could afford to ignore the giant no longer. They came down and offered to help running the factory for the common man. The manager and the ordinary wage-earner, the technician and the unskilled fraternised. The factory no longer belonged to an anti-social owner. It came to be the community's. The community ran it for its common weal.

The factory owner was spent up. The factory ceased to yield him profit. Hoardings had gone in paying for bullets spent on the wage-earner. But hope deferred made the heart sick. He could no longer live on mere hope of recouping his earnings and profits. And as he walked up to the common labourer to work side by side with him, the latter did not hesitate to clasp the fallen enemy's hand in the most cordial of spirits.

The alien imperialist also would soon find that the diabolical mechanism he had invented was not as effective in serving the purpose it had in view as in killing. It would kill millions. But inflation and monopoly procurement and world food pool could not expand his trade. It had shrunk for ever. His day of exploitation was gone never to return again. The markets would never again revive. To-day it was the low purchasing power, tomorrow it would be the common man's desperate determination to come to his own, not to touch the goods of one in masterly relation with him. The alien ruler's interests faded away. He recognised there was a place under the sun for everyone. They together—the alien ruler of to-day and the common man of India—planned a new world based on a transformation of relationships, a new world emerging out of the common man's revolutionary struggle. And those unable to reconcile themselves to the new order, to those new relationships, simply disappeared from the scene.

The Last Clash

This is a picture of the relationships as they are to emerge out of the Revolution—the Revolution we are working for. But before that happy consummation, there is a crash—a crash the like of which history has never yet known. The consummation is not all a matter of evolutionary growth, does not automatically follow from the simple recognition of the elimination of classes that the development of capitalism has resulted in. The capitalist is blind, the imperialist is blind even as Charles I was blind, even as Louis XIV was blind, even as Nicholas II was blind. He does not see that his market has shrunk from natural reasons. Violence, the

most intense form of violence on his part would follow just from this blindness. He would measure his strength with the giant before he goes down. The child is born in the womb with the small self-supporting republics coming up all over the country. But before it is actually born into the free world, the womb must burst. It is just not born automatically. History does not evolve into and through such automatic accomplishments.

A great realist, Gandhi knows it. Every time he appears to be hoping voluntary transfer of power. He even pleads for it. It does not materialise. It is simply not to. Then the word goes forth: Do or Die. Gandhi seems to be giving the devil more than his due and hopes. He hopes and builds up. He loses nothing in the process. He rather helps—and creates conditions for—the masses to make up for the lag in consciousness. There comes a clash. The clash comes on an issue which, at least for the time being, touches the masses, is nearest to the heart of the masses, and on which the adversary is put in the wrong. He is put in the wrong partly by Gandhi's pleadings also. The imperialist is so palpably in the wrong that the masses feel it. A clash on such an issue, and a timely clash under appropriate conditions accomplishes the educative process of decades within the shortest space of time. The time for the clash also is deliberately shortened to avoid needless demoralisation and retrogression.

Mass action is sharp and swift. If it does not attain its objective the masses retrace their steps for a while, as Marx points out. They refresh themselves, regain strength for a more determined effort and then jump into the fray with a more irresistible force. When the masses retire, it is posi-

tively harmful to keep up a show of struggle through one form of action or another on the part of the upper class leadership. It makes the masses go through needless repression. And repression at such a moment is more severe than during mass action. Suffering thus brought upon the masses for activities for which, the masses feel, they are not responsible, instead of strengthening them, causes a feeling of depression. No revolutionary leader knew better than Gandhi the moment when to retrace steps and how to do it. And to recall a movement is a far more difficult part of the leadership's task than to initiate it. Gandhi does it exquisitely and inimitably.

Thus the nation grows from strength to strength. That is the political process of the revolution. There is rapid awakening of the masses, while, *pari passu*, the problems of the revolution become clearer and clearer before the guiding layers. In between clashes, we have to build up. This time we have arrived at the deepest and widest chasm of all history. So we must build up on the broadest and the most solid foundation so that the revolution may emerge victorious, the newer relationships may establish themselves on the soundest footing. We have this time, we must constantly remind ourselves, to prepare for the last great clash, perhaps the greatest in human history.

IX

THE NEW ORDER

The imperialist domination of India is at the very centre of world imperialism—the imperialist system that brings into being the rising world fascism. So it is only natural, only meet and proper that India has developed the new technique of struggle against it. But even though the very foundation of that imperialism has been rendered hollow, the imperialist would not yield the ground without making the last effort at survival the most violent effort he is capable of. He would break the republics, he would snatch away the food they grow for themselves, he would smash the *charka* they ply.

There the common man tolerates it no more. There again the old and the new intermingle. Seizure comes in on the path of building up. The common man can no more yield, he cannot afford to get the power he has built up being smashed up once again. He has tasted power and he must hold it. There is a leaping movement. He just dashes to the imperialist's power centres rendered superfluous by the power he has built up. He dashes to them and sits the imperialist out. He is shot right on the head. But he is a hydra-headed giant. He is deathless. Shots are unceasing, still he holds on to the seats of power. This time he is simply irremovable from there. He replaces the imperialist and builds up the revolution.

Here again takes place a transformation of relationships.

While some of our upper and middle classes still handle the alien imperialist's whips and rifles, play their janissaries, it is their armed forces that change sides. In the building up of power, we win over our people by service. We serve those who in their utter destitution need loving service, help and co-operation. We serve them and educate them. We educate them also by our self-suffering. They know the class relations as they are and as they should be. They know that it is the existing class relations that make them suffer so terribly. And they include the brothers and sisters, children and parents of those who are overwhelmingly the manpower—armed manpower—today on the side of the opponents of our freedom. It is to feed these kith and kin that the soldier fights and the policeman takes up the *lathi* on behalf of the fascist State. It is now we who feed them, when the fascist State starves them. There is a shifting of sides.

Shifting of Sides

There are already symptoms of unrest. Even before we have begun to feed, the unrest has been manifesting itself in the police force in several provinces, in the R.I.N. units, in the Army in several units, even in some Gurkha units. The unrest follows from the infliction of starvation, from the illegitimate, even the criminal use of Indian forces in imposing the fascist order on the Greek people, on the Indonesian people, on our own people. They saved the Britisher's empire while few Britishers seriously fought, or died. Now, after the war, they see their own people, own kith and kin permanently living a precarious life—they are being subjected to starvation and fascist bondage and brutality. They hear it declared from the United Nation's Food

Board that fifty crores of people would starve the same way as five crores starved in Bengal in 1943, while he also hears Britain's Lord President of the Council declaring that the Britishers will now begin enjoying a standard of living he never knew before. The unrest spreads, spreads like a prairie fire even as it spread in the Russian army during the earlier months of 1917. The fire continues spreading while it is up to us, the Congressmen, to serve the near and dear ones of those Indians who serve as Britain's mercenaries to-day both in the army and the police.

We feed them in our self-sufficient commonwealths while at the same time bear the brunt of the soldier's arms and the policeman's *lathi*. This cannot go on for any length of time. Suddenly the pendulum must have a sharp swing to the opposite end. The moment for the final upheaval must synchronise with this swing. The sixth of November may prove too early and the eighth too late.

Nay, the sweep is broader. It is not merely ourselves, the common people of India that starve. The same is the lot of the other colonial countries throughout Asia and Africa, perhaps some of the recently conquered countries elsewhere. They have enjoyed a better standard of living even till the other day. There, the infliction of starvation will be followed by quicker reactions. The technique of the total war against world capitalism developing in India is likely soon to spread to other colonial countries also.

The World Revolution

But it cannot end there. It must of necessity include the alien forces, the imperialist's own blood relations. They come from the peasants and working classes of the ruling

countries. These latter will come to have a better appreciation of the fascist systems of their own countries as on the one hand, greater efficiency is introduced in their post-war industries and, on the other, the struggle in the colonial countries proceeds—the struggle through the building up of individual and local self-sufficiency. Unemployment can no more be checked. The standard of living can no more be maintained. The fascist system will stand fully exposed. The democratic façade can no longer be retained. Unemployment can be kept down for a short while only by the well-known fascist devices. Doles will rob all the profit.

Capitalism's trade lost means destitution for the workers and peasants of Britain—may be, not exactly of the same sort as in India. But the former are used to a better standard of living. The change, therefore, unlike in India, is sharp, making for an immediate revolutionary struggle. This may be averted for a short while by the time-honoured trick. British capitalism may choose to turn the entire British population into a vast army. But with the invention of the atom-bomb type of armaments, the need for vast armies also has disappeared. This is a vicious circle. And moving in it, already British capitalism is talking of, and perhaps preparing for a war with Soviet Russia. Soviet Russia is the only country where the workers and peasants produce for consumption and not for the capitalist's profit, and therefore do not live at the mercy of the capitalist. The British labour and peasantry already know it much better than before the last war. And the British armies out of these classes have already been growing resilient in imposing the fascist order in Greece and Indonesia and perhaps elsewhere.

To add to this, a devastating war within the living

memory of the last one, and the common people of Britain will know, even as we do to-day, where they stand vis-a-vis their own State as well as the people of the colonial countries. They will know other ties than the national. Relationships will once again transform themselves. National borders will be transgressed. The common men of all countries will come together as against the family coterie of the monopolists. Wars waged or simply proposed or even wars to suppress the colonial peoples will soon convert themselves into the sharpest of class wars.

The total war against capitalism thus spreads from ours to other colonial countries and from colonial countries to possessing countries. The struggle assumes an international character. The problem being common the technique also is probably common—with interpenetration of opposites here and there, leading to what form of negation of the negation on the problem of violence and non-violence, remaining just yet unknown.

But the revolution on the part of the common people of all lands emerging into co-operative commonwealths, where the profit motive ceases to operate, where there are no more relations of competition, where the existing relation of master and slave vanishes, in short, where there comes into being a classless society, the question of violence and non-violence ceases to tax the human mind. Man will then know better use of his time and energy than devising means to kill his fellowmen. He will live in quite different relations with them. And the common man of Britain will readily, even lovingly, co-operate with the common man of India in the building up of a happier society emerging out of its present pre-human relations.

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